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THE CASE OF THE Hackney-Coachmen.

THAT by an Act made in the 13th. and 14th. Years of the Reign of the late King *Charles* the II. the Number of Hackney-Coaches was limitted to Four Hundred, and the Rent at 5 *l. per Annum* for every Coach, which Act expired about Fourteen Years ago, that during the time the said Act was in Force, whilst Horsemeat was cheap, the Coachmen supported themselves, and paid their Rent, but in dear Years many of them broke, and were not able to pay, whereby they lost their Licenses.

That soon after the Expiration of the said Act, many Inholders, Victuallers, and other Persons set up Coaches, and by the greatness of their Number destroyed one another, for there have not been fewer than Fifty Persons that have broken in every Year since the said Act expired; and those that are now in Being, have run out all they are worth, and besides that, have contracted great Debts to Tradesmen, in hopes of keeping up the Trade until it should be regulated again in Parliament, so that there is not now in being one Coachman in a Hundred that is worth One Hundred Pounds and all his Debts paid.

That two Years since, when the Coachmen by the Poll Act, were appointed to pay Five Pounds for every Coach, divers of them not being able to pay it, were constrained to leave off their Calling, and by that means they and their Families are become chargeable to the Parishes where they live, and a many others by the dearness of Horsemeat, and decay of Trade, are daily forced to leave their Trade, so that the Number of Hackney-Coaches kept in *London*, and the Places comprised within the Weekly Bills of Mortality, in *January* last, amounted to Eight Hundred and Thirty Three, and no more, as appears by an estimate taken by two credible Persons, and prov'd by their Affidavit taken before a Master in *Chancery*: And if all the Money these Coachmen now get were deposited in one Persons hands, and equally distributed to them all, it would not be sufficient to buy their Horses Meat; And if the Act should pass for setting a Fine of One Hundred Pounds on every Coach, and four Pounds *per Annum* Rent, and the Number at Eight Hundred, the said Coachmen will be thereby utterly undone, and they and their Families must become chargeable to the Places where they live, they having not been brought up to any other Trade or Calling.

Objection. Did not the Coachmen when Licensed by Virtue of the said Act, sell their Licenses for 100 *l.* a License, and did not many Persons Licensed, that had no Coach, let their Licenses to hire for 10 *s. per* Week, and why may not the same be done now.

Answer. There were but very few Licenses sold at that Rate, and those that were so sold, were bought by Persons that knew nothing of the Trade, for it is very well known that many persons then quitted their Licenses, not being able to pay the Rent, which was but 5 *l. per Annum*; and as to the letting out their Figures at 10 *s. per* Week; true it is that some Licensed Persons, who had not Coaches, did in *Winter* time, when a Parliament was sitting, and Horsemeat cheap, let their Licenses so, but then this was but for a small time, for those persons would have been glad to have let their Licenses to any person by the Year, at Four Shillings a Week. And further, the Number then was but Four Hundred, and by this Act, the Number is proposed to be doubled, so that there can of course be but half that Work to every Coach.

Objection. That by the great increase of Buildings and concourse of People, there will be greater need of Eight Hundred Coaches, and they will have more Work than Four Hundred could have expected at the time of making the said Act.

Answer. It is not above fourteen Years since the said Act expired; and the Parliament that sate after the expiration of that Act, were of Opinion that four Hundred Coaches were sufficient then, and had revived the said Act then, but that great Application was made to them, to make the Number five Hundred, which they would not agree to; Besides there are a great many Hundred Gentlemens Coaches and Hackney Chairs set up since the making of the said Act, which very much lessens the Hackney-Coachmens Trade, and the multitude of Buildings hath not made the Concourse of People greater, as may appear by the present Weekly Bills of Mortality, compared with them of the 14th Year of King *Charles* the II. and it hath made the Streets more commodious to walk in then they were, by which the Coachmens work is much abated.

The Truth of which matters the Hackney-Coachmen can make appear to the Honourable House of Commons if they may be permitted so to do.